

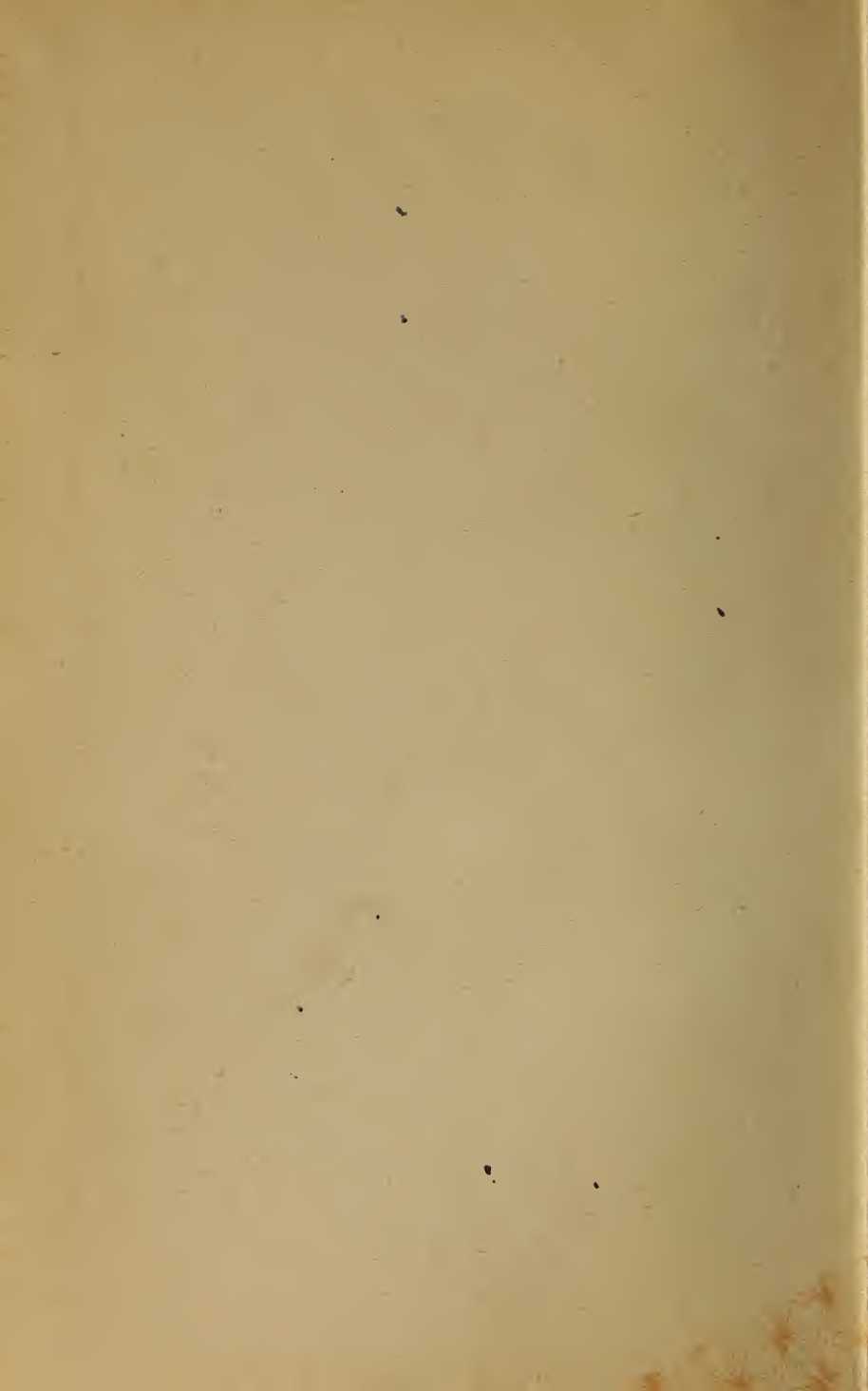
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





AGNES,

DAUGHTER OF

WILLIAM THE BAPTIST;

OR,

THE YOUNG THEOLOGIAN.

BY

REV. J. M. CHANEY, D. D.

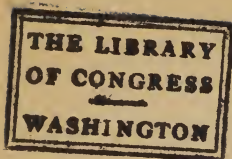


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AGNES,

DAUGHTER OF

WILLIAM THE BAPTIST.

CHAPTER I.

IT has been asked, What becomes of all the very smart and good little children of whom we read in Sunday-school books? Such a question is sneeringly asked, implying that all such are too smart and too good to live in this world, and, therefore, all die in early childhood.

But children may be very smart and very good, and yet live to be old men and old women. A good child is far more likely to live and grow up, and become strong and healthy, than a bad one.

Little Agnes, a daughter of William the Baptist, is a very smart child, and a very good one, but that will not keep her from being a strong, healthy girl, nor will it prevent her from becoming a very old woman.

She was small for one of her age. When thirteen years old most people would have taken her to be about nine or ten. When about thirteen she expressed a desire to unite with the church. But she was told that she was too young. Besides, she did not seem to be very seriously inclined. In disposition she was frolicsome and full of fun, and her brothers said full of mischief. She was very obedient, and everyone thought her a good girl. But from her age and her fondness for fun her parents thought that her desire to unite with the church was a childish whim. But they were mistaken. For some weeks after she had been told that she was too young to unite with the church, as her mother afterwards told me, she seemed to be unusually quiet, and often seemed to be meditating, as if in trouble. When asked if anything troubled her, she would answer, No! and at once become as light-hearted as ever.

As I passed their house one evening she was in the yard; alone, carelessly knocking croquet balls through the arches. Before she saw me, I called to her and asked who was

beating in the game. Looking up, she laughed and said, "Come in and see if I cannot beat you." "All right," said I, "if you beat me I shall think you are an expert, for I used to play a good game."

The ground was smooth, but not level. At one of the arches the incline was considerable. She was accustomed to it, and knew how to get the ball through; but I made many ineffectual efforts. My failures afforded her endless amusement. The best I could do was to get one game in three. When the games were ended she was in high glee because of her success. Almost in the midst of her childish glee she surprised me with the question, "How old do you think one ought to be before they become a Christian?"

"At that age," said I, "when they are old enough to be accountable for their deeds."

"But," said she, "when is a child thus accountable?"

"When it knows the difference between right and wrong; when it knows what sin is," said I.

AGNES. "Then I have known that a long

time. Don't you think I am old enough to become a Christian?"

PASTOR. "Yes, child, as I said before, you have been old enough ever since you knew anything about the nature of sin. I hope you are a Christian now."

A. "I hope I am. I told ma I wished to join the church, but she said she thought I had better wait until I am a little older."

P. "You say you hope you are a Christian; what makes you think so?"

A. "The Bible says that Jesus died to save sinners, and that he will save all that come to him. A long time ago, before I went to school, I went to him, and asked him to save me."

P. "Do you think you have been a Christian ever since?"

A. "Yes, I know that I love him, and love to read about him in his word, and love to pray to him."

P. "Well, Agnes, I am surprised and pleased to hear all this from you. Not only do I think you are old enough to be a Christian, but you are old enough to enjoy all

the privileges of the church. You were old enough to go to the Lord's table when you first went to Jesus, even if you were not more than five years old. Children should not be persuaded to join the church before they know what they are doing. Paul says that those who go to the Lord's table sometimes eat unworthily, 'not discerning the Lord's body.' Do you know what that means?"

A. "I think I do. I heard you explain it. We must not think that doing that will save us, but we must do it to show that we believe in Christ, and that we take him as our Saviour."

P. "When you saw others celebrating the Lord's Supper how did you feel?"

A. "When the bread and wine were passed around I wished that I could take them also. I felt sure he was my Saviour, and I wished to take them to show my love for him."

P. "You say you love to read his word. Do you mean that you love Bible stories, such as that about Joseph, or Samuel, and such like?"

A. "Oh, no! mother read them to me before I learned to read. I love to read some of the Psalms, and the New Testament."

P. "Are there any portions of the New Testament in which you take special delight?"

A. "There are so many that I can hardly say which. The fourteenth chapter of John, and the fifth chapter of Romans I loved so much that I committed them to memory."

P. "I am delighted to find that my frolicsome little girl is so seriously inclined."

A. "I do love fun, and I love to laugh. But do you think there is any harm in these? Mr. B., when he preached for you last winter, said that Jesus wept, but never laughed. I don't believe it, and I would like to know why he said it."

P. "I remember that he said it, and I asked him why he made such a statement. His reply was, that the Bible tells us that he wept, but there is no intimation that he ever laughed. And he said, further, that when he was twelve years old, when he went up to the feast at Jerusalem and had remained after his

parents had gone, so that they had to return to find him, in answer to their question why he had done so, he told them he must be about his Father's business. In this, Mr. B. said, he showed that he was always filled with a sense of the awful responsibility of his mission so that he never felt like laughing."

A. "And do you believe that?"

P. "I am sure he was a very thoughtful child. But I suspect that, as a child, he loved childish sports, and often made the walls of his mother's home resound with his childish laughter."

A. "I am so glad to hear you say that. When I see my kittens playing I just think God intended them to be happy and to have lots of fun. And I think he intended that we should be happy and have fun. And I do not like to think that Jesus never laughed when he was a child."

P. "Well, Agnes, I wish I could talk longer with you, but I should have been home before this. But I shall see you again. I shall have a talk with your parents about your being admitted to the Lord's table."

A. "You mean that you will talk to them about my joining the church?"

P. "No, you have been a member of the church all your life."

A. "Well, I never knew that before. How can that be?"

P. "I will see you again, and explain it to you. As you have so much love for the Bible, and will be, I am sure, an apt pupil, I shall make an effort to instruct you in some of the doctrines of religion, as I wish you to be an intelligent Christian, and worthy of the name of 'The Young Presbyterian.'"

CHAPTER II.

AGNES was attending school in our female seminary. She was in the highest class in the preparatory department, and occupied the highest place in all her studies. The closing exercises of the seminary occurred the week after my conversation with her. The night preceding the commencement exercises the young ladies gave an entertainment, chiefly musical, but interspersed with a few recitations. On a printed programme, I noticed that Agnes was down for a recitation, and the subject, "Old Dog Bowser." I was curious to know what she had to recite about an old dog, and also how she would succeed.

When her name was called she stepped forward, neatly dressed, and had the appearance of a child not more than ten years old. Her voice was remarkably clear and distinct, and every word she spoke could be distinctly heard by all in the audience. There was a wonderful naturalness in her method of reciting. She

did not seem to be repeating something she had learned in a book, but to be telling something that had come under her own personal observation. She said that away out in the Kentucky hills lived the good widow Bascom. She had no education, but loved her Bible, her church, and her dear pastor. Her pastor was a good man, and desired to do good, but was illiterate. His tones in preaching were sing-song, and to make an impression on his hearers seemed to depend more on sound than on sense. But he generally succeeded in making his hearers weep, and none wept more freely under his preaching than the good widow. She had four sons, all excellent boys, and all devoted to their mother. But Bob, the youngest, a bright, promising lad of sixteen years, could get no instruction from the sermons of his mother's dear pastor. Whether wisely or otherwise, he communicated this fact to his mother. The good woman was shocked and troubled to hear such a statement from her boy. She tried to reason with him, but without success. As a last argument, she told him that she could not listen to her dear pastor without weeping.

"Yes," said Bob, "and I could make you weep in the same way, by simply repeating such nonsense as, 'O! dear mother, old dog Bowser went down into the field and caught a chipmunk.'"

The mother was bewildered; she knew not what to do. At last, to convince him of his folly, she told him to try. Her purpose was to ridicule his effort in attempting to do such a foolish thing.

So he began. He repeated over and over, "O! dear mother, old dog Bowser went down into the field and caught a chipmunk." He imitated the tones of her pastor; he became more and more affected; in a most doleful manner he repeated it with tears and sobbing; and at last his mother became visibly affected, and wept as she was wont to do in church. Then suddenly Bob stopped, and said, "Ah! mother, I told you I could make you weep!" The only excuse made by the mother was, "O! my son, your tones were so heavenly!"

The recitation was perfect. It was received with rounds of applause. Agnes was *encored*. For this she was not prepared. At last the

teacher told her to go forward and make a polite bow to the audience. She went forward, and in a most inimitable and affecting manner, when death-like stillness reigned, said, "Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

The audience was affected by this as strongly as by the other recitation, but in a very different manner. Many were seen to wipe the tears that were stealing down their cheeks.

The next evening, when I called to see her, I told Agnes that I had been greatly pleased and profited by both her recitations.

"The first recitation," said I, "reminded me of the fact that children are often religiously affected by preaching which, if not just like that of which you spoke, yet is, in reality, no better. The preacher tells thrilling stories that make the people weep, and yet what he says is entirely destitute of anything that will instruct them about Jesus and salvation through him. Often when children are deeply affected by such pathetic stories, they are invited to join the church; and under the excitement, they are

led to do so. Do you know that religion consists of something more than mere feeling?"

A. "I remember that you preached on the text, 'This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' You said that knowledge is essential to salvation. And I remember that you said that we must have religious feeling, but that no feeling is religious unless it is excited or produced by religious knowledge. When you first said that religion does not consist in feeling, I did not like it, because I thought you meant that feeling was all put on. But I know that old Mrs. Weaver is a good Christian, and often she gets to shouting, and says she is so happy."

P. "Yes, to read or hear what Jesus did for us, and what he promises, should make us very happy, even to the point of shouting. But it is also true that grown people, and especially children, can have a great deal of feeling that has no religion in it, just like Mrs. Bascom, who was made to weep by the heavenly tones of her son Bob.

"But I called to talk with you this evening

about a question you asked me at the close of our conversation last week. Do you remember what it was?"

A. 'Yes, sir, very well. You said I had been a member of the church all my life. I suppose you mean that I became a member when I was baptized in my infancy.'

P. "Not exactly; I meant just what I said. Perhaps you are too young to understand it; but I will explain it in as simple a manner as possible. When our race fell, and came under condemnation because of the sin of Adam, God entered into a bargain, or, as we call it, a covenant, promising to save all who would trust in the Redeemer he promised. This covenant was repeated very clearly to Abraham. In it he says that he will be a God to all who will believe. But he said more. He said, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.' We believe that Peter referred to this promise when he said, Acts ii. 39, 'For the promise is unto you and to your children.' Now, this promise to the children of believers is not absolutely a promise of their salvation, but a promise that they should belong to what was called,

in the Old Testament, 'the congregation,' or the people of Israel. And under the New Testament, the children of believers belong to the same congregation, or, as we call it, the church of God. In Genesis xvii. 14, you will see that God says that if a child was not circumcised it should be 'cut off from his people.' But it could not be cut off from something to which *it did not belong*. Therefore, it belonged to '*the people*,' '*his people*,' before it was circumcised; and it was to be circumcised *because* it belonged to '*his people*.' Just so we believe that the children of Christian parents belong to the church, and for this reason we believe they should be baptized."

A. "Do you think that a child will be saved because its parents are Christians?"

P. "Not at all. Paul shows this in the second chapter of Romans. He there shows that the mere fact that a man was a Jew by birth would not secure his salvation. Then, in the third chapter, he represents some objector as asking, Well, then, if they are not certainly saved, what benefit is there in being born members of the church, and in being circum-

cised? He answers this in the second verse, and the substance of his answer is, It is very beneficial, because it places them in a condition very favorable to their salvation."

A. "I thought I heard you say once, in a sermon, that you believed all baptized children would be saved."

P. "I am sorry I said anything to make such a false impression on your mind, for I do not believe anything of the kind. What I do believe, and what I said, is this: That every child will be accepted and saved that is consecrated to God as he has directed. Let me try to make this plain to you. God says to a man, if you believe on Jesus I will be your God, and you shall be saved. If the man has a child, God further says to him, I will enter into covenant with you in reference to your child also if you so desire, and I will be a God to it. If the parent desires thus to enter into covenant with God in reference to his child, he tells God so, and solemnly consecrates it to God, and promises to use all proper means to bring it up for God. This he does when he answers the questions which

the minister asks him when the child is presented to be dedicated to God. After this has been done then the child is baptized. According to what I have said, how many things are there in the consecration of a child?"

A. "Two. First, the parents are to enter into covenant with God in reference to the child and give it to him. Then it is to be baptized."

P. "And which of these do you think is the more important?"

A. "I should think the first."

P. "You are right. If either is to be omitted let it be the baptism. To baptize a child when the parents do not heartily enter into covenant with God in reference to it is but a mockery. But if the parents do thus intelligently and heartily enter into covenant with God, surrendering the child to him, pleading his promises in reference to the child, and then have it baptized to seal the covenant, I believe the child will be as secure of salvation as the parent."

A. "I am so glad you have explained this

to us, for I often wondered what good it did to a child to baptize it. Sometimes I almost wished that I had not been baptized when I was a babe. But now I see how thankful I should be that my parents were Christians, and that they entered into covenant with God in reference to me and had me baptized. When you were leaving last week you said you wished me to be an intelligent Christian, and said something about teaching me. I told mother what you said, and asked her what she thought you meant; and she said you meant just what you said."

P. "Your mother was correct. I wished to make you a little theologian; but I guess you do not know what that means."

A. "Preachers are theologians, and I suppose they are so called because they know so much about the Bible."

P. "Well, I wish you to know something about all the great doctrines of the Bible; and I will take pleasure in teaching you if you wish to learn."

A. "I do so much wish to learn, but I am afraid you will find me a dull pupil."

P. "We are accustomed to say that some people have a talent for particular studies. So, also, does it require a special talent to be able to understand religious truth. What this talent is you can learn from Psalm xxv. 12, 14. Will you please read it?"

A. "'What man is he that feareth? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.'"

P. "From these and other passages we learn that the talent necessary to understand the great truths God has revealed to us for our salvation is an earnest desire to know them. This I am persuaded you have. You told me you had committed some passages to memory. I would like to impress on your mind the importance of treasuring up in mind the words as well as the doctrines of the Bible. Will you please read Psalm cxix. 11?"

A. "'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.'"

P. "This implies two things: (1), The word must be treasured in mind; (2), It must have a place in the heart; that is, we must love it.

“If you will reflect a moment, you will see that the word is the Christian’s whole stock in trade. Without it he cannot believe, nor pray, nor find comfort in trouble, nor perform any Christian duty. It is not enough that he has it in his Bible. What benefit to have all your knowledge of arithmetic in a book and none of it in your head? And so of every other kind of knowledge.

“Some professing Christians are so ignorant of the Bible, or have so little of it in their memory, that it is difficult to know how they can be saved. Paul teaches this in 1 Corinthians xv. 1, 2. Will you please read it?”

A. ““Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.””

P. “Here you see Paul says we may hope to be saved by the gospel, if we keep it in memory; or, more literally, if we hold it fast. According to Dr. Charles Hodge this means, ‘if we hold fast the gospel,’ or have persever-

ing faith. Dr. Thomas Chalmers says: 'It is not enough that we barely believe the gospel, for we are told on the highest authority that unless we 'keep it in memory' we have believed in vain. "

A. "I never thought of that before. But I see that the Bible cannot do any good unless its truths are in the heart, as that verse in Psalm cxix. says."

P. "Paul urges Christians to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the mysteries of the age how Christians can be satisfied to live in ignorance of the word of God and of the precious doctrines of grace. An intelligent man, speaking of the members of a Presbyterian Church numbering at least two hundred and fifty, said he felt sure that not forty of them had any knowledge of the doctrines of the church. This is like Paul's representation of some professing Christians in his day. Will you please read it, in Hebrews v. 11-12?"

A. "'Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to

be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God ; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.'"

P. "The one of whom he wished to tell them was Jesus. The difficulty of telling them was not in the nature of the truths to be told, but because of their dullness or ignorance. When professing Christians are so ignorant of the teachings of the Bible, Paul says (Eph. iv. 14) they are in danger of being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

A. "I am more anxious than ever to learn all I can about the doctrines of the Bible, if you will be so kind as to teach me."

P. "I will do the best I can. In our next talk we shall see what we can learn about the condition of man as a sinner, and his need of a Saviour."

CHAPTER III.

IN making a pastoral call, I was delighted in hearing an incident in reference to Agnes, told me by Mrs. L., at whose house it occurred. On the day before, she said, Agnes was at her house, and by chance there were three or four lady callers, all members of our church. One of them was a fashionable young married lady, Mrs. B., who had a child a few months old, and in the course of conversation remarked that she intended to have her child baptized on the following Sabbath, and described the beautiful dress she had prepared for it for the occasion. One of the ladies, Mrs. R., a mother of five children, remarked that she had never had any of her children baptized. She said her husband, also a member of the church, did not believe in infant baptism; and for her part, she did not see what good it would do them. She thought that it would be better to let them grow up and then choose for themselves. The

other ladies said they thought she did wrong; that she ought to have the children baptized. She was not pleased with being charged with wrong-doing, and to defend herself she demanded to know what good could result from baptizing a little infant that had no consciousness of what was being done. The answer they made was, that it was a rule of the church, and that those who join the church ought to comply with the rules. Her reply was, that she had never been told that it was a rule of the church; and she mentioned the names of several members whose children had not been baptized.

Agnes was manifestly deeply interested in the conversation, said Mrs. L.; and at last, turning to Mrs. R., she asked, "Don't you believe that Jesus loves little children?"

"Yes, child," said Mrs. R., "and I was so delighted to hear you recite that little verse, 'Suffer little children,' etc., when they called you back. It almost made me cry. I thought of my own little child that died, and which I know is in heaven; and then I thought of my own children that are living, that are so dear

to me, and I wondered if Jesus really thought of them and loved them."

A. "The Bible says Jesus gives them, and when they die, it says, he takes them away. If you are a Christian, he is your God; and he says, if you wish it, he will be a God to your children also, if you will enter into covenant with him, and consecrate your children to him."

Mrs. R. "Where does he say that?"

A. "Why, over in Genesis, when he called Abraham"; and, getting a Bible, she read it.

Mrs. R. "But what have we to do with that? That is 'way over in the Old Testament, and refers to the Jews."

A. "But here is what Peter said on the day of Pentecost: 'The promise is unto you and to your children.' It is the promise God made to Abraham to which he refers. So now God offers to make a bargain with you, that he will be a God to you, and to your child if you will consecrate it to him; and the baptism is just to show that you have made the bargain with God in reference to your child."

Thus Agnes preached them a little sermon. They all listened with amazement. Both Mrs.

R. and Mrs. B. were manifestly affected by what they had heard.

I left the house of Mrs. L., thankful for what I had heard, and said to myself, "Truly, 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.'" I wondered what would be the result of the little sermon. This was on Friday. On the following Sabbath Mrs. R. presented her five children for baptism, and Mrs. B. came forward to give hers to the Lord. I noticed that the child of the latter was clothed with very modest apparel. The beautiful and costly dress prepared for the occasion was left at home.

The mother afterwards told me that she had never dreamed of the importance and solemnity of the service until she had heard it explained by little Agnes. She said that she had been at great expense in having a beautiful dress prepared for her babe, to show it off to the best advantage. But when she thought what a mockery it would be to present her child as she, in her ignorance, had intended,

she could not think of having the dress on her babe, lest her thoughts should thereby be distracted. She wished, she said, to think of but one thing when she stood up with her babe, and that was, to enter into covenant with God, that he would be the God and Saviour of her child.

CHAPTER IV.

AGNES, by invitation, came to the parsonage about 3 o'clock P. M. on Monday. I had told her that the subject on which we would talk would be man's condition as a sinner. But, on reflection, I concluded first to have a talk with her on the authority of the Bible. When this purpose was made known to her she expressed her pleasure, because, as she said, she had seen so much in the papers about the errors of the Bible. With surprising earnestness she said, "If the Bible is the word of God, I do not see how it can have errors; and if it has errors, I do not see how it can be the word of God."

"You reason like a logician," said I, "but there is no middle ground. Either the Bible is inspired, and is the word of God, or it is not. It is not my purpose to consider the matter in an argumentative manner, but to tell you, in as simple a manner as possible, my own views on

the subject, which also are views of our church. Will you read Second Timothy iii. 16-17?"

A. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'"

P. "When Paul wrote this, the Old Testament Scriptures were well known to the Jewish nation, and used by them. All of them had been translated into Greek, and thus they had them both in the Hebrew and Greek languages. From the statement of Paul it is certain that he regarded the book which we call the Old Testament as inspired. Will you read Second Peter i. 21?"

A. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'"

P. "Here Peter is speaking of that same Old Testament, and from his language it is very certain that he regarded it as truly the word of God. Both Paul and Peter were inspired in what they wrote. Therefore, we believe that the Bible is the word of God "

A. "Did not Jesus teach us that the Old Testament was the word of God?"

P. "Yes; he used it, and quoted from it, and gave it his sanction as the word of God; and I would have you note carefully that Jesus gave his special sanction to one of the books which some tell us cannot be a part of the word of God. I refer to the Book of Jonah. Jesus spoke of the story of Jonah and the whale as a reality. Then, either it was true, or Jesus was mistaken. But no one, unless an infidel, could believe the latter."

A. "In our Sunday-school class some one asked whether the writings of the apostles are as binding as the statements of Jesus."

P. "And what conclusion was reached?"

A. "Some thought they were, and some thought not."

P. "And what do you think?"

A. "I think that if their writings are the inspired word of God, they must be equal to the words of Jesus."

P. "Your conclusion is correct. A pretended friend of the Bible undertook to prove from the Bible that women may speak in pub-

lic, and preach. She began by saying, 'Not Paul, but Jesus, is to be the authority in deciding this question.' What do you think of that?"

A. "She did not think that Paul was inspired, or else she had a very silly theory of inspiration."

P. "As a Christian you should always hold to this truth, that the Bible, as the word of God, is the final authority on all questions of which it treats. It is of special importance to keep this in mind when reaching conclusions that have a moral nature, such, for example, as the temperance question. There is danger of getting wise above the Bible, and of reaching conclusions that would necessitate the condemnation of Jesus himself.

"Shall we now proceed to consider the question of man's fallen nature, or wait till another time?"

A. "Oh! go on, unless you prefer to wait."

P. "What do you say of the moral condition of infants?"

A. "I do not know what to say, so I guess I will not say anything."

P. "That is correct. You have no right to say anything, nor to have a thought on the question, unless you get your opinions directly from the Bible. The one great difficulty with many persons is that they insist on having an opinion of their own on questions which can be decided only by the word of God. You, of yourself, know nothing about the soul of an infant, whether it be sinful or holy."

A. "From what I can see I would say it is not sinful."

P. "But sometimes appearances are deceiving. It is said that tiger whelps, when quite young, are as harmless and playful as little kittens. But what would you say in reference to the *nature* of those little animals that seem so innocent and harmless?"

A. "That bad nature is in them, and will show itself when they grow up."

P. "Then, I suppose, you would say that fierceness of disposition is in the young tiger in an undeveloped state."

A. "Yes, sir, it is there, and will show itself when it gets older."

P. "That is our belief in reference to hu-

man beings. We believe that sinfulness is in the nature of the infant, and that it will certainly manifest itself when the child grows older. There are four things I wish you to learn on this subject:

“1. The fact of the sinfulness.

“2. The nature of it.

“3. Whence it comes.

“4. The extent of it.

“It will be well for you to have a few passages of Scripture bearing on each one of these: 1st, The fact of the sinfulness. Will you read Psalm li. 5; and the latter part of Ephesians ii. 3?”

A. “‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ ‘And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.’”

P. “Both of these passages refer to the moral condition of man in infancy, and they teach that our nature is depraved and sinful.

“2. The second fact is the nature of the depraved condition. But this subject is what the apostle calls strong meat, especially for one so young as you, but I hope to be able

to make you understand it. Can you see any difference between *sinful* and *sinner*?"

A. "I believe I can. I suppose you mean that little infants are sinful, or have wicked natures, but they are not sinners, or do not commit sin, until they get old enough to know right and wrong."

P. "You have the distinction between the two words, but you get astray in applying it. Our belief is, that infants are both sinful and sinners. The best way to enable you to see that they are sinners is to consider it in connection with the third topic, that is—

"3. Whence is it that we become sinners? Will you read Romans v. 12?"

A. "'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

P. "In the margin of your Bible, do you see another translation of the last phrase?"

A. "Yes, sir; instead of 'for all have sinned,' it is 'in whom all have sinned.'"

P. "The latter is a better translation. According to both translations all, including infants, have sinned. But the latter (as in the

Greek) tells how or when all have sinned ; that is, we sinned *in Adam*. Will you read the first clauses of the eighteenth and nineteenth verses ? ”

A. “ ‘Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.’ ‘For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.’ ”

P. “Who is *the ‘one’* that is here spoken of ? ”

A. “It is Adam.”

P. “Our belief is, that, according to the purpose of God, Adam was the representative of all his posterity ; and therefore his sin was imputed or charged to all his natural descendants, so that in the sight of God all are sinners. Again, when Adam sinned, his moral nature became corrupt, wicked, sinful, and as his descendants we inherit that nature ; and thus we are both *sinners* and *sinful*.”

A. “I think I understand it. And that is the reason why the little ones suffer so much, and why so many of them die. But don’t you think God saves all the little children that die ? ”

P. "We are not ready for this question yet. But I will say that, in my opinion, all who die in infancy are saved. But the fact that they suffer and die clearly shows that they are sinful.

"4. The fourth topic is the extent of the sinfulness. We believe in the doctrine, as it is called by some, of *total depravity*. But this will need some explanation to enable you to understand it."

A. "I know that total means entirely, or altogether. And, I suppose, that total depravity means that all men are as depraved or wicked as they can be."

P. "That is the meaning that our enemies put on the expression, but that is not our meaning at all. We do not believe that any man in the world is as wicked as he can be. We do not believe that any, in this world, ever go to that extent in wickedness. We believe that God's Spirit strives with all men, and because of this all are more or less restrained and kept from becoming as wicked as they otherwise might be. But we believe that, apart from this grace of God, every creature

would be capable of going to the farthest degree of wickedness, and of committing every imaginable kind of sin."

A. "I see it. But I never did understand that before. I believe it is true."

P. "I will ask you to read only one passage bearing on this point, although many are found that teach this truth. Will you read Romans vii. 18, the first clause?"

A. "'For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.'"

P. "By 'flesh' here Paul means his sinful nature, apart from the grace of God.

"We have thus gone over the doctrine of man's condition as a sinner. It would be well for you to continue the examination of the subject by the aid of your reference Bible. By the few passages we have given you, you can readily find others of the same kind, and can thus see how clearly and abundantly the Bible sets forth our condition.

"Our next effort will be to show you some of the needs of man, as a sinner; and some of the obstacles in the way of his salvation."

CHAPTER V.

THE daily papers contained accounts of a railroad disaster by which many persons, men, women, and children, lost their lives. A place had been selected where, by loosening some rails, the whole train was thrown down a steep embankment. The object was robbery. Agnes had read a detailed account of the disaster in the evening papers just before I made my promised visit. Upon seeing me she said, "It seems to me that such a crime would make any one believe in the total depravity of some people. How can men become so wicked, and commit such awful deeds?"

"Ah! my child," said I, "those men are no better specimens of total depravity than we are. We know nothing of their history and early training. I am very sure that I am indebted to the grace of God for being kept from such wickedness. If I had been surrounded by evil influences, as they were, and as destitute of God's restraining grace as they, I would have

been no better. I think it was John Newton who, seeing a poor drunkard lying in the gutter, said, 'There lies John Newton, except for the grace of God.' Remember that total depravity does not mean that men are as wicked as they can be, but that, apart from the grace of God, they are entirely destitute of moral good, and capable of any degree of wickedness.

"But tell me, Agnes, what do you think of the work necessary to prepare such creatures for heaven?"

A. "Do you think it possible for such men as those train-robbers ever to go to heaven?"

P. "Your excitement from having just read the account of their awful deed leads you to ask such a question. But, nevertheless, it serves a good purpose in directing your attention to the difficult nature of the work of saving a sinner."

A. "It would be a difficult work to save such sinners."

P. "No more difficult than it was to save Paul; no more difficult than to save any other sinner. But that is the subject for our talk this evening. I would like for you to under-

stand some of the difficulties in the way of the salvation of any one. By such knowledge we shall be prepared to appreciate the greatness of our salvation through Jesus, and to praise him for his wonderful work in saving us.

“Will you please read Genesis ii. 17?”

A. “‘But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’”

P. “From what we learned in Romans v. 12, who, do you think, are included in the threatening here made?”

A. “I suppose the whole race.”

P. “Yes, it was man, as such, including Adam and all his natural descendants. By ‘death’ is meant not simply nor chiefly the separation of the soul and body, but it includes every kind of evil, and especially the separation of the soul from God. So far as finite creatures, such as we are, could see, that death would be eternal, for these reasons:

“1. Man could not bring himself out of that estate of death.

“2. It would not be possible for another,

such as an angel, to take man's place, for that would not be man dying, but some one of another race. But the threatening was 'thou,' man.

"So far as we can see, God's veracity, his truthfulness, was at stake. If God continued true to his word, death had to be the portion of the race. These difficulties, which seemed immovable, must be removed before man could be delivered from condemnation.

"3. But if that which seemed impossible were possible, yet another difficulty would present itself, forever keeping man out of heaven: his *nature* is *corrupt*, unholy. Will you read Romans viii. 7-8?"

A. "'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.'"

P. "With such a nature, heaven would be a hell to man. Thus you see there is a necessity for two deliverances: (1), From condemnation, that is, the guilt of sin; and (2), From the corruption of sin; both of which seemed impossible. Do you think you have understood what I have been telling you?"

A. "I think I have; but I never thought of it before. I never thought about the truth of God being in the way of his forgiving man. I thought he could forgive us just as easily as our father or mother can. I was over at Mrs. Warren's the other day, and little Johnnie was playing with his ball in the house. He threw it against the window, and almost broke the glass. His mother scolded him, and said, 'Did not I tell you to quit playing in the house with your ball? Now, if I catch you playing with that ball in the house again, I will switch you; do you hear me?' Johnnie went out-of-doors and played a while. Then he came inside and began throwing his ball up to the ceiling. His mother did not say anything; perhaps she did not see him. Presently the ball struck the nice shade of the hanging lamp, and the pieces flew all over the floor. I tell you his mother was mad. She scolded him like everything, and told him to go out and get her a switch. Johnnie went and got a good, big one, but came in crying, and telling his mother how sorry he was, and promised that he would never play ball in the house again. When his mother saw

him crying so, she was sorry for him, and took him in her lap and petted him, and told him that she would forgive him this time, but that he must not disobey in that way again."

P. "Yes, Agnes, parents often thus lie to their children, and the children soon find it out. But God does not, and cannot lie. He always does just as he promises, and just as he threatens. I will tell you a little story, and I know that it is true: Mrs. Smith had a little girl named Hattie. She was a good child, but was thoughtless. One day, after it had rained and the street was very muddy, little Hattie went across the street to play with a little girl, and got her dress very muddy. Her mother put on her some clean clothes, and told her, if she went again in the mud, she would certainly switch her. About an hour afterwards, the same little friend called to Hattie to come over. The mother happened to look through the window, and saw her little daughter almost across the forbidden road. She called little Hattie back, and sent her for a switch. When this was brought, the mother talked to Hattie, and told her how naughty it was for little chil-

dren not to obey their parents. She also told her how very much she disliked to punish her dear little girl, but that she must do as she had said she would do. Little Hattie was very sober, and said, 'Ma, before you whip me, let us pray, and you ask God to make me a good little girl.' Her mother then knelt down and prayed, just as Hattie had suggested. When they got off their knees both were crying, but in her tears the mother administered the threatened chastisement."

A. "I don't see how she could whip then."

P. "You think she ought to have told her a story, like Mrs. Warren, do you?"

A. "Well, I suppose Mrs. Smith did right; but I guess most mothers would not have done that way."

P. "This will, in some measure, illustrate to you one of the great obstacles in the way of God pardoning sin. His justice and his truth both seemed to make it impossible for the sinner to escape, or for God to forgive. A great difficulty was to see how God could be *true*, and yet *forgive the sinner*. Paul refers to this in Romans iii. 26. Will you please read it?"

A. “‘To declare at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.’ I begin to see how difficult it was to forgive the sinner. But God does forgive sinners now, and I do not see how he can, when he said they must die if they sinned; and they did sin. Then, after all, does he not do just as Mrs. Warren did with little Johnnie?”

P. “That will be the subject of our next talk. But I wish you to remember that the *truth* of God was in the way of his showing *mercy* to sinning man; also, that the *righteousness* or justice of God stood in the way of our *peace*. These things were so opposed to each other that it seemed impossible that they could be reconciled. But that seemingly impossible thing was accomplished. How it was done, we shall inquire in our next lesson. But will you now read Psalm lxxxv. 10?”

A. “‘*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*’”

P. “Here the psalmist declares that the *truth* of God and his *mercy* are no longer op-

posed; and now his *righteousness* is no longer in the way of our *peace*. These, which were opposed, are now completely reconciled; and to show the reconciliation, they are represented as having exchanged the kiss of friendship."

A. "Well, that is beautiful; but I do not see how it could be done."

CHAPTER VI.

AT our next interview I found Agnes greatly disturbed in mind. As soon as I had shaken hands with her, she said, almost in the tones of upbraiding, "I always thought it was easy for God to forgive sin, and to give us salvation. But when you told me of the difficulties in the way, and especially that his truthfulness made it necessary for him to punish the sinner, that is, the one that sinned, I just said that, after all, God had to do something very much like Mrs. Warren did about Johnnie. At least, he did not punish the one threatened. Instead of that, he punished one that was entirely innocent, and had not sinned. This was not doing as he threatened. And now I don't see how God can be just, when he punishes some one else instead of the sinner."

To this I replied: "I am very sorry that you are troubled, yet I am glad you can see those difficulties in all their force. No one can understand God's plan of saving sinners,

unless he can see something of the difficulties that were to be removed. There are two mistakes men make :

“1. Some say there were no difficulties in the way; that all that God had to do to save sinners, if he wished to save them, was *just to save them*—to forgive them like Mrs. Warren forgave little Johnnie.

“2. The other mistake is in supposing that God punished some one different from man.

“Both these are mistakes. The first, as you have seen, would make God a liar. The second is no better, because God did not say, in the threatening, ‘*either you shall die or some one in your stead,*’ but he said ‘*thou, man, shalt surely die.*’”

A. “That is what troubles me. According to the gospel another died instead of man, and thus man escapes.”

P. “No, it was not another, instead of, and different from man, that died, but it was man himself, precisely according to the threatening. Here is the great mystery so difficult to understand until God revealed it to us ; the mystery of God manifest in the flesh. The Saviour

was, indeed, God, coëqual and coëternal with the Father, but he was also a true, genuine man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; descended from Adam, and as really a man as any of us. In both Matthew and Luke his genealogy is traced back to Adam to show that he was truly descended from him, and thus one of us.

“As I explained to you, the threatening was not against Adam as an individual, but against him as a man. It was against humanity, or the human race.

“Our Redeemer has but one person, yet he has two natures. He is truly God, and truly man. In the first chapter of Hebrews, Paul establishes his perfect divinity; then, in the second chapter, he shows his perfect humanity. Because of the manner of his generation he was not sinful, yet perfectly human. Paul says in Galatians iv. 4: ‘God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.’ He is called the second Adam, or the second man, because he was a human creature and under the law.

“Let us now go back to the time of the

creation of man. Although not expressed, yet this is clearly implied, that God said two things to man :

“ 1. Obey, and thou shalt live.

“ 2. If you do not obey, you shall die.

“Remember, this was the promise and the threatening to man; and they apply as much to Jesus as to Adam.”

A. “But God said if *man* did not obey he should die. He did not say he would give him another chance to obey.”

P. “Now I see your difficulty. I am glad you made that statement. I think I can make it plain to you. You do not take in all that is included in obedience. The very idea of law includes two things :

“1. It requires obedience, positively, directly.

“ 2. It includes a penalty, contingently ; that is, in case the law is violated.

“Now let us suppose a case. Our State law says a man shall not *shoot quails* between the first of January and the first of October. There is a penalty of five dollars for the violation of this law. Now, in how many ways may a man comply with this law?”

A. "I think in two ways :

"1. By not shooting a quail in, the time mentioned.

"2. By paying the penalty if he does."

P. "That is correct. I think you can understand it, and I will explain it further. The word *righteous* does not mean the same as *holy*. A righteous man is one that has complied with the law; one that has conducted himself in such a manner as that the law can neither say nor do anything against him. But a holy man is one whose nature is holy. Now, give attention to a question I ask. Think carefully before you answer, as it may seem somewhat strange to you.

"Here are two men, A. and B. Mr. A. is a good citizen, and has never violated any of the laws of the State. Mr. B. is a bad man. He stole a horse. The penalty which the law attaches to horse-stealing is five years in the penitentiary. He was found guilty and sentenced according to the law. He served his full time in prison, was then released, and is now home again. Which of these men is now the most righteous man? "

A. "Well, it does seem strange. But according to your meaning of righteousness one is just as righteous as the other."

P. "You are correct. I have gone over this to show you that *obedience* to the law, or conformity to it, extends farther than you thought.

"Now, suppose the threatening had been suffering for a million years, instead of death. Then, when man had sinned, would he not have complied with the law if he had suffered the million years?"

A. "He certainly would."

P. "Then, if man will suffer the penalty, whatever it is, will he not have complied with the law; and could God's justice require anything more?"

A. "Let me see. There are so many things to keep in mind that my head gets bothered. When God created man, he placed him under the law. The law requires one of two things, that is, either obedience, or to suffer the penalty for disobedience.

"Yes, I see that the law may be met or complied with in one of two ways: either by obeying it, or by suffering the punishment which it threatens."

P. "As far as you have gone, it is very well. But, on the supposition that Jesus complied with the whole law, I wish you to see that it was *man* thus complying with it. Your difficulty has been, that the law did not say, 'If you, man, do not obey, either you, or some one instead of you, shall die'; but it said, 'You, man, shall die, or suffer the penalty.' Now, what I wish you to see is, that if *Jesus* suffered the penalty, then it was *man* that suffered it, and not some one else."

A. "I see that if Jesus in his human nature is a man, and one of us, then all that he did was done by man, or by one of us."

P. "Now we are prepared to consider what Jesus did in accomplishing our deliverance from the curse or penalty of the law.

"There is one short statement of Paul in which the whole work of Jesus is presented to us in a very condensed manner. It is Romans x. 4. Will you read it?"

A. "'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.'"

P. "According to our previous statements, what is the end of the law?"

A. "It is either obeying it, or, in case of transgression, suffering the penalty."

P. "And what did I tell you is meant by righteousness?"

A. "It means being just what the law requires."

P. "Then, 'the end of the law' and 'righteousness' are one and the same thing. *That* is what Christ is to those who believe on him.

"As you said, the end of the law is either obeying it, or suffering its penalty. As Jesus was made under the law, and under the law that man had broken, he must meet both these ends; that is, he must both obey it and suffer its penalty. I do not wish to bother you with big words, but I think it best to use some technical terms, because they express just what we wish; and I will explain them so that you can understand them. The terms are, 'active obedience' and 'passive obedience.'

"Active obedience is obeying or doing what the law says you must do. 'Passive' means suffering; and passive obedience means obedience by suffering, or obeying the law by suffering its penalty. Christ rendered both these

kinds of obedience; and I wish you to keep in mind the fact that both these kinds of obedience were rendered by him in his human nature.

“I shall first explain to you his active obedience.

“It is true that he obeyed during his whole life on earth, but his active obedience may be said to have been condensed in one short period of forty days, known as ‘The Temptation.’

“It seems necessary that moral agents shall be tried or tempted, as it is only by such means that it can be known what they are, or what they might do. Thus, the first Adam was tried or tempted. It was necessary that the second Adam should be tried. Will you read the latter clause of Hebrews iv. 15?”

A. “‘But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.’”

P. “There are three, and only three kinds of temptation:

“1. To distrust God.

“2. To trust him in a wicked, presumptuous manner.

“3. To yield to the sinful allurements of the world.

“Christ endured all these kinds of temptation. They are recorded in the first eleven verses of the fourth chapter of Matthew. I wish you to understand them thoroughly, because they form an important part of our Redeemer’s work. Will you please read the first verse?”

A. “‘Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.’”

P. “Did he go to that destitute place of his own accord?”

A. “It says he was led there by the Spirit.”

P. “It is important to keep in mind the fact that he was there from duty, because it was the revealed will of God that he should go there, and that he should remain there until it was God’s will that he should depart. Why did God wish him to go there?”

A. “That he should be tempted of the devil.”

P. “Was it, then, an accident that he there met the devil, or that the devil there found him?”

A. "No, it was the will of God, for the Spirit led him there for that very purpose."

P. "Before you read the first temptation, I wish you to remember that this was a temptation to *distrust God*. It was the will of God that Jesus should be brought into great straits. To this end, God in his providence brought him into such a condition and into such surroundings, that it was impossible for him to get anything to eat or drink for a period of forty days."

A. "But he was divine, and fasting would not affect him as it would us."

P. "In this, my child, you are mistaken, and have forgotten what I explained to you, that in both his active and passive obedience we are to regard his human nature alone. Fasting would affect him just as much as it would any of us. Two statements, one in the beginning and one at the close of Matthew's account of the temptation, show us how he was affected. In the first one it is said that he *hungered*; in the other, it is said that *angels came and ministered unto him*. This shows the straits to which he was reduced by the

fasting. It also brings before us very prominently his human nature."

A. "But, Mr. C., if he is both human and divine, and yet one person, I do not see how you can thus separate his natures. When I think of him I cannot do that."

P. "Will you please read John iv. 6?"

A. "'Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.'"

P. "Was this weariness of both his natures, or of his human nature alone?"

A. "Of course his divine nature could not become weary."

P. "Will you read John viii. 58?"

A. "'Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.'"

P. "Now, Abraham lived nearly two thousand years before Jesus was born. How, then, could Jesus have been before Abraham?"

A. "I see, it could only have been true of his divine nature."

P. "You must remember that everything pertaining to Jesus as the God-man is mysterious. But if we wish to have an intelligent view of his work in our salvation, we must

view him in his double nature, and in some measure we must distinguish between these natures in some of the things affirmed of him. Thus, it cannot be affirmed of his human nature that he is '*the mighty God*,' '*the everlasting Father*,' the one who '*was in the beginning with God*,' and who '*was God*,' the one who '*made all things*,' and many other similar statements. These were true of *Jesus Christ*, but they were true of his *divine* nature only.

"Also, certain things affirmed of him were true of his human nature only, as when it is said that he was *hungry*; that he *did eat*; that he was *weary*; that he *wept*; that he *suffered* and *died*."

A. "I see it. And so, in his temptation, we are to regard his human nature only."

P. "We must do so for two reasons: First, divinity could not be tempted; Secondly, if it was his divine nature that was resisting the temptation, that is, that was obeying, then it was not *man* obeying, but God. But the perfect obedience was required of *man*."

A. "I remember that Mr. B. said, in his sermon at our last communion, that Jesus ren-

dered the obedience in his human nature, and his divine nature made his obedience valuable, so that it would have infinite value, and thus could be for our benefit."

P. "I asked him where he found such an idea in the Bible. He said it was necessary so to regard it, because, if we are to regard his obedience as that of a man only, it could not avail us, because, as a man only, he would owe obedience for himself, that is, perfect obedience; but no obedience can be more than perfect; therefore, all the obedience he could render would be that which he owed for himself, and, therefore, none of it could be placed to our credit.

"To this, I told him that Paul, in Galatians iv. 4, says that Jesus was 'made of a woman, *made under the law*,' and, therefore, *did owe this perfect obedience for himself*. And yet this same Paul, in Romans v. 19, declares that the obedience of Jesus does avail for us.

"I showed him that the *disobedience of one man* had *infinite demerit*, so that the whole race came under the curse; and further, if that *one man* had *obeyed*, then his obedience would

have had *infinite merit*, so that all the race would have enjoyed the benefits of his obedience.

“Then, why should the *obedience of Jesus* need help from divinity to render it effectual for us, to be imputed to us, that we might be regarded and treated as righteous? Do you not see that the obedience of Jesus in his human nature would be as valuable or efficacious for us as the obedience of Adam, if he had obeyed?”

A. “It does seem to me that it would; but I never thought of it in that light. Now I begin to see more clearly how the truthfulness of God is maintained in accepting the obedience of Jesus for us, or instead of that which we are required to render to God’s law.”

P. “Will you now read the first temptation?”

A. “‘And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’”

P. “From this temptation it is clearly im-

plied that the human nature of Jesus alone was to be active. Divinity could take no part in it, else he could have supplied his wants on the first day of his need, or on any subsequent day. It was the man Jesus that was in such straits. He was placed there by the will of God, and with such surroundings that he could get nothing to eat or drink. He must remain there until it was God's will that he might depart, or until God in his providence should afford him relief. Already he had been brought to the verge of starvation when the devil suggested to him that under such extreme circumstances trust ceased to be a virtue, and suggested an extraordinary and illegitimate means of supplying his wants and saving his life. The means suggested were illegitimate, because he was there as a man, to trust and obey God. But if he called his higher nature, his divinity, to his aid, it would no longer be human obedience, or the obedience of man, which the law required. Therefore, he rejected the suggestion of the devil, and in substance told him that he would continue to trust God, even though death by starvation should be the re-

sult. By the expression 'every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' is meant, especially, the *promises* of God. Thus he assured the devil that his walk would be, to the end, not by sight, but by faith."

A. "It is said in that passage in Hebrews that he was tempted like as we are. But when are we tempted in that way?"

P. "We have all been tempted in that way; some more sorely than others. I shall endeavor to make it plain to you: God promises to care for those who trust in him. There are hundreds of such promises. I shall mention but one (Matt. vi. 33), 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' But God in his providence sometimes permits his people to come into great straits. Perhaps an illustration will make it plainer to you: A young man supported his widowed mother and some younger sisters. He found employment as salesman in a large dry-goods house. His salary was barely sufficient to afford a comfortable support. But hard times came on. Business was dull. His salary was lowered

three times. He was no longer able to support those dependent on him. Sickness invaded his mother's household. The doctor's bills were to be paid. He knew not what to do. He did not have means to comfortably house, clothe, and feed his loved ones. In his extremity the devil suggested to him that his employers were rich, and were not dealing justly with him; were not paying him what his services were worth. He could easily help himself from the store. It would never be discovered. His employers would never miss what he might take. Then why not, under such circumstances, resort to such means, whereby his wants could all be supplied, and his mother and sisters made happy? Here, you see, was a case of trusting in God, or starving, or, at least, great suffering. Under such circumstances a man's trust is put to the test. The case is analagous to that of Jesus. In thousands of such cases men are tempted as Jesus was. When God's people are tempted to repine at their lot; to complain of their condition, it may be their poverty, or ill health, or estrangement of friends; in all such cases the temptation is to *distrust God*.

“There must be no limit to our trust. Like Job, we must say: ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’”

A. “Was Adam tempted in that way?”

P. “Trust goes under different names. Sometimes it is called belief. God told Adam he should surely die if he partook of the forbidden fruit. Adam did not believe God. If he had confided or trusted in God it would have been well for him. His sin was distrust. But we must postpone a consideration of the second temptation, as you have had enough for one sitting.”

A. “I have been so much interested that I could sit all day to hear such things. I now can see more and more how God can be just, and yet justify sinners that believe on Jesus.”

CHAPTER VII.

AGNES had a friend, Florence G., about two years older than herself, to whom she communicated what she was doing in the way of studying theology. She told Florence what she had learned about the baptism of infants, and about man's condition as a sinner, and the difficulties in the way of his salvation. Florence expressed a wish to become pupil number two. When Agnes told me of her desire I readily consented, as I felt sure she would be an apt learner, and in their private conversations on the subject they would be a mutual help to each other. At the time appointed both were present, and each the picture of expectancy.

My first work was to question Agnes on the subject of our last conversation, partly to ascertain how well she had understood and remembered it, and partly for the benefit of our new pupil, that she might the more readily be prepared for the consideration of the second

temptation. The examination of Agnes was very satisfactory, and I told her she was a genuine theologian.

“And now,” said I, “give attention, and note that the second temptation was the opposite of the first. Whereas the first was a temptation to distrust God, the second was a temptation to trust him in a presumptuous and unwarranted manner. God’s promises of help are made to man only in his time of need—in his extremities. He made us rational, intelligent beings, and expects us to use the powers he has given us. He does not promise help when and where we can help ourselves. The devil understood this, and shows his great cunning in this second temptation. He seems to have reasoned in this manner: ‘I see it is useless to attempt to persuade him to distrust God’s care over him. His trust is infinitely great. But this will help me to persuade him to trust in an unwarranted, sinful manner.’ Therefore he approaches him, and in substance says: ‘I admire the strength, the steadfastness of your trust. It is commendable, wonderful. It will be well with you if you

always exercise such confidence in God. He will surely take care of you. I remember that the Scriptures give assurance of such care, and of his delivering power, even in circumstances when deliverance would seem impossible. I remember one such promise, very precious and emphatic. It says: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Now go with me to the holy temple, and from its high pinnacle cast yourself down, and thus show that your trust is, indeed, infinitely great.'

"Have you understood the nature of this temptation as I have thus endeavored to present it to you?"

A. "I think I have. But I do not understand the answer of Jesus. Why did Jesus tell Satan that it was written that he should not tempt him?"

P. "Your question shows clearly that you do not understand the answer of Jesus. From your question it is evident that you think it means that Satan should not tempt Jesus."

F. "And is not that what Jesus said?"

P. "Not at all. On the contrary, Jesus quotes it as applying to himself, as if he had said, 'It is written that I shall not tempt God.' He quotes the passage as addressed to *man*, and declares that it applies to *himself*. For him to do what Satan had suggested would be to tempt God; therefore he refused to do it."

A. "Now I see just what it means. And do you not think it is a pretty way for him to tell us that he is a *man*, and *one of us*?"

P. "Yes; he was ever ready to set forth his humanity, or his human nature. Also, in this second temptation is clearly set forth the fact that his human nature alone was concerned in the temptation; for in his divine nature he could have thrown himself down from that high pinnacle without injury, and without appeal to the Father for help. But in his answer he admits that it would have been necessary for him to trust to God to be kept from injury, and to trust in God under such circumstances would be tempting him."

A. "I have been wondering how we are ever tempted in that way."

P. "It is a very common temptation with us, and assumes various forms. I knew a man that was opposed to having a lightning-rod put on a church building. He said it was wrong, because it showed a want of trust in God. I thought I would silence him, and I said, 'Mr. Edwards, would you be willing to show your trust in God by building up a large fire in your fire-place on Sabbath morning, and then going off to church, relying on God's kind providence that no fire would fly out and set your dwelling on fire?' To my astonishment, he said he would. I told him that would be doing just what the devil wanted Jesus to do in the second temptation. I succeeded in showing him that such trust would be presumptuous, wicked.

"When duty calls a Christian to go into a region where he will be exposed to contagious disease, it is proper for him to trust God that the disease shall not attack him; but to go into such a region just to show how strong his trust in God is would be presumptuous and sinful.

"Another form of the temptation is to presume on the goodness and mercy of God. A

professing Christian does this when he presumes that God will not punish him for some form of wrong-doing, simply because he is a Christian.

“The sinner thus tempts God when he presumes that God will not destroy him, though he does not confess Jesus before the world, as God has commanded. We have no right to presume that God will bless us in circumstances in which he has made no such promise; and we have no right to presume that he will not destroy us in circumstances in which he has said that he will destroy us.

“As a matter of fact this kind of trust is pushed to such an extent that it reaches the point of distrust, as in the first temptation; because it is really disbelieving what God has told us.

“Will you now read the third temptation?”

A. “‘Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.’”

P. "All the allurements of the world may be classed under three heads : riches, honors, and pleasures. These are offered to Jesus in their totality : 'All these will I give thee.' Everything his imagination could picture ; everything his heart could wish that the world, in any of its departments, could furnish ; all should be his. We cannot conceive a greater temptation than this. In Luke's account it is added that Satan said : 'For that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.' Some have affirmed that both Jesus and Satan knew that this statement was not true. Then it was no temptation. To make it a temptation, Jesus must have believed that Satan could fulfil his promises. Thus, only, does the temptation assume its true magnitude. No temptation presented to us can be so great, for at the best we are offered only a portion of what the world affords."

F. "It seems to me there is a great difference in the way Jesus was tempted and the way we are tempted. He did not have any inclination to do any of those things that Satan wanted him to do. And if he had no sort of

inclination, then we can hardly call it a temptation."

P. "You must remember that the essential thing in a temptation is a *trial* to find out what is in one, or what he will do. I suppose your idea of temptation is that one must have a desire to do a thing before it can be called a temptation. But the difference between a temptation that is sinful and one that is not, is in this, that there is, or is not, a desire to do the given thing. The moment I hesitate, and begin to consider whether I shall, or shall not do the given thing, then sin begins. According to your idea of temptation, of course Jesus could not be tempted, because he was tempted without sin. But, as I said before, temptation is simply a trial to find out what is in an individual. You may pass through a room and see a large amount of gold, and the thought may pass through your mind that you could take that without ever being discovered. But if the thought is rejected at once, without any hesitation, then you have been tempted without sin. You have been put to the trial, and the discovery is made that you are honest at heart.

Every conceivable inducement was presented to Jesus to get him to distrust God, and to trust presumptuously; so were all the allurements of the world brought distinctly before him, and enjoyment from all offered him; but there was no hesitation; all were at once rejected. It is true, Satan has an immense advantage over us in his temptations, because he has our sinful natures and wicked inclinations as helps in inducing us to heed his suggestions.

“How did Jesus resist this last assault of the tempter?”

A. “He said: ‘It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and him only shalt thou serve.’”

F. “I now see what he meant. I always thought he applied this language to Satan; but now I see that he applied it to himself.”

P. “Yes, here again, in substance, he said, ‘I must worship God, and him alone.’ And in this he clearly indicates that he is referring to his human nature only: ‘I, as a man, made under the law, must obey the law, which says, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”’”

F. "What does the last verse mean: 'Then the devil leaveth him; and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him'?"

P. "The devil, confessing his defeat, left Jesus. Thus, practically, the active obedience of Jesus was ended. As the second Adam, or representative of men, he is gloriously triumphant. He has obeyed the law perfectly. Now, all those related to him will receive from his obedience just what all related to Adam would have received and enjoyed had Adam himself obeyed.

"Thus Jesus is the 'end of the law for righteousness,' in the matter of his active obedience.

"It is an interesting fact that both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus shine forth most conspicuously in connection with angels. I know of no better proof of the absolute divinity of Jesus than the statement of Paul in Hebrews i. 6. Will you read it?"

A. "'When he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.'"

P. "Remember, this was the command God

gave to the angels concerning the infant Jesus, while he lay in the manger at Bethlehem.

“So here, at the close of the temptation, the complete humanity of Jesus shines forth, (1), Because of his great prostration; (2), Because angels came to minister to his necessities. He was man, acting for man, and did not appeal to his divine nature for help; therefore, the Father came to help him through the ministration of angels. They, no doubt, could clearly discriminate between his two natures. At the manger, it was his divinity that they worshipped; here, it was his humanity to which they ministered. In both cases it was that same incomprehensible God-man, Immanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ, dual in his nature, but one in person, forever.

“In our next lesson we shall consider his other work in becoming ‘the end of the law for righteousness,’ that is, by his passive obedience.”

CHAPTER VIII.

BOTH Agnes and Florence were present ahead of time, and it needed no questioning to assure me that my pupils were deeply interested in their work.

In order that the subject to be considered might be the more readily understood, I asked Agnes to state how the "end" of any law might be met.

"In one of two ways," said she: "First, by doing what it requires, and by abstaining from what it forbids; Secondly, in case the law has been violated, by suffering the penalty that was threatened."

P. "Very good. And in which case would the end of the law for righteousness (that is, to meet the demands of justice) be most perfectly met?"

A. "The demands of justice would be satisfied alike in both cases."

P. "And do you see this, Florence?"

F. "I could not have understood it if Ag-

nes had not explained to me the difference between righteousness and holiness. She said a man is righteous when he cannot be charged with a violation of the law. She gave me the case of one who had robbed a man, and had been sent to the penitentiary for five years for his crime, and had served out his term and returned. She asked me if the man was now as righteous, in the sight of the law, as a good citizen who had never violated any law. At first I could not see it, and did not believe it. But I saw that the law could have no charge to bring against him, and, therefore, according to the meaning of the word righteous, he must be as righteous as the other."

P. "As I explained to you, the work of Jesus was double, because he came to represent those who had already violated the law. That he may be 'the end of the law' for those who have thus sinned, he must both obey it, and also suffer the penalty. We have already seen how he obeyed it in his temptations; now we are to consider how he met the penalty in his sufferings.

"It is true that in a very important sense he

was suffering the penalty during his whole stay on earth. But, as his active obedience might be said to have been concentrated in the forty days' temptation, so his passive obedience may be regarded as condensed in what he suffered in Gethsemane and Calvary."

F. "I have often wondered why he was so much troubled that night in the garden, when he took Peter, James, and John, and went to another part of the garden, and told them how great his sufferings were. I concluded that it was because he knew so well what was awaiting him on the next day."

A. "That is what I thought. He knew they would crucify him the next day, and that was enough to fill him with sorrow."

P. "Will you turn to the gospel history, and read some of his statements indicating his great sufferings?"

A. "'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here, and watch with me.'

"'And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'

“‘And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly. And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.’”

P. “And you think that such expressions of sorrow were wrung from him because he foresaw that he would be crucified on the morrow?”

F. “What else could it have been?”

P. “I would like you to see that such thoughts degrade Jesus below many of his followers.”

A. and F. “Why? What do you mean?”

P. “Well, listen. Did you ever read the account of the burning of martyrs at the stake, and how they endured their sufferings for their love to Jesus?”

F. “I read about Cranmer. They threatened to burn him if he did not recant. He did recant, and thus escaped. But he repented of his recantation, and then they did burn him. And he thrust his right hand into the flame, that it might be the first to suffer, because it had written the recantation. I also read of a young lady who was burned because she was a

Christian, and in the midst of the flames she sang praises to God."

P. "And, so far as you can judge, which do you think would cause the most suffering, crucifixion, or slow burning?"

A. "I think the fire would."

F. "So do I."

P. "Then think of it. According to what you stated, it would seem that Jesus made greater exhibitions of alarm about the prospect of being crucified than some of his followers did in the midst of flames when they were suffering so much physical agony for his sake."

F. "Well, I never thought of that. But it seems to be true. But what else could make him so sorrowful?"

P. "Will you read Isaiah liii. 5, 6?"

A. "'But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'"

P. "Now read what Paul says in 2 Corinthians v. 21."

A. "'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'"

P. "The language of Jesus in connection with his sufferings, when viewed in the light of these passages you have read, will throw light on the subject we are now considering. Will you read Luke xxii. 37?"

A. "'For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.'"

P. "Here it is plain that *sin* had much to do with his sufferings. Not his *own sins*, but *ours*. He was made to *be sin* for us. Our iniquities were laid on him. And in the verse you just read, he said the time had come when he must be reckoned *among transgressors*. Now read Mark xiv. 27."

A. "'And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'"

P. "You must note that in Isaiah it is said 'The LORD hath laid on *him* the iniquity of us all.' And here God says, '*I* will smite the Shepherd.' From these statements we can readily see that the sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane were from the *hand of God*."

F. "What did he mean when on the cross he cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"

P. "That exclamation, taken with those passages you read, show clearly that his sufferings were from *God*, and on account of *sin*. The 'end of the law,' in case of transgression, was *death*, according to the threatening, 'the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' What is meant by '*death*,' as thus threatened, we cannot know fully in this life. In part, it meant to be under the curse of God. Will you read Galatians iii. 13?"

A. "'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'"

P. "In all that he endured in Gethsemane and on the cross, he was meeting the penalty incurred by man because of his sin. What-

ever the law threatened, that is what Jesus endured. Whatever was meant by death, that is what Jesus suffered. He was to be, completely, 'the end of the law,' both in obeying its precepts and suffering its penalty. He continued in this work until he cried, 'It is finished,' that is, his work of being 'the end of the law.'"

F. "Do you think he suffered what Adam would have suffered if salvation had not been provided?"

P. "Most certainly he did, else he could not have been the 'end of the law.' That he suffered separation from God appears from that cry just before death, 'My God, my God, why hast *thou forsaken me?*' That he regarded himself as having suffered all that the law and the justice of God demanded, appears from the statement already quoted, found in John xix. 30: 'When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished*; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.'"

F. "But Adam's suffering would have been eternal."

P. "So it would; but its eternal continu-

ance was not in the curse itself. It would have been eternal, simply because Adam had no power to extricate himself from death when once under its power. But read John x. 17-18."

A. "'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.'"

P. "Here is one of the occasions on which his divine nature shone forth. It was as *man*, in his *human nature*, that he suffered and died; but when his work was finished, and he came under the power of death, then, by his divine nature, he burst the bands of death, arose, and came forth."

F. "I now see, far more clearly than I ever saw before, how Christ met the penalty of the law, and satisfied every demand of justice; but my mind is confused when I begin to think how his work stands related to the race. If he satisfied the *whole law*, and suffered all that was threatened against man on account of sin, then how does the race stand related to his

work; or, rather, how does his work stand related to the race?"

P. "I understand your difficulty; that same question has bothered others, and has given rise to much contention and controversy. But I think I can enable you to understand it sufficiently to remove from your mind that confusion of thought of which you speak. The subject is somewhat confusing, because it is to be regarded in a two-fold aspect, that is, *divine* and *human*. From the divine standpoint, we must regard the sufferings and work of Jesus as having reference to *his own people*. Will you read John xvii., 6th and 9th verses?"

A. "'I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' 'I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.'"

P. "Here, as in other places, we read of a *people* being given to *Christ*, so that he called them *his people*. Will you now read John x. 14-15?"

A. "'I am the good shepherd, and know

my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.' ”

P. “These passages settle the question as to the nature, purpose, and object of his work, when the subject is viewed from the divine standpoint. *Jesus died to save the people God the Father had given him.*

“When viewed from the *human* standpoint, it is somewhat different. Then we see his work simply as sufficient in its value to avail for delivering from the curse, not every creature, but all those who are descended from Adam. In itself alone, it did not deliver a single one from a single sin. It delivers only those who *become related to him*, or, as we might say, are *descended from him*. Now, note this: our relationship to *Adam*, because of which we are *sinner*s, is by means of *natural birth*. But we are not so related to Jesus. Our relationship to Jesus comes from *faith* in him, and our descent from him comes from our regeneration by the Holy Spirit. On this point, read John i. 12, 13.”

A. “ ‘But as many as received him, to them

gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' ”

P. “Also Galatians iii. 26.”

A. “‘For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.’ ”

P. “In these passages you see our relationship is not by *blood* or *birth*, but by *faith*. So in Romans x. 4, it is declared that Christ is the end of the law *to every one that believeth*.”

A. “But did you not tell me that I was born a member of the church?”

P. “I did, and I am glad you have kept it in mind, and now call attention to it. I did say that you became a member *by birth*, but that did not make you a child of God. It entitled you simply to the blessings and privileges of the church. And even *that* was by reason of *faith*, that is, the faith of your parents. It is also true that by reason of that faith, God grants regeneration by his Spirit, so that, even in infancy, one may become a child of God.”

A. "Won't you please explain just what is meant by faith, as it is used in that verse in Galatians iii. 26?"

P. "I will endeavor to make it plain to you. But, first, I wish to tell you what it is *not*. It is not simple, general belief of any kind or in any thing. One may believe *every truth about God, and about Jesus Christ, and everything revealed to us in the Bible*; but that will not make him a child of God. Devils believe all such truths. It is true, we must believe all these truths, but such belief is not that spoken of in the text you quoted. To illustrate what saving faith means, let us suppose the case of a man who has some knowledge of God and of Jesus and his work, who feels that he is a sinner and wishes to be forgiven and saved. He goes to God and asks to be forgiven and saved. Let us suppose that God asks him the question, 'Why shall I forgive and save you?' and the man answers, 'Because I am a sinner, and you are merciful.' Now God will do nothing without a sufficient reason, and that man has given no reason at all. God never offered to save

men because they are sinners, nor did he offer to save them because he is merciful. His veracity and justice forbid.

“Again, suppose the man should say, ‘I wish you to save me because I repent of my sins, and I promise to be baptized and to unite with the church, to read my Bible, and do all the good I can in the world.’ All these things are right and good in themselves, and are duties which must be performed; but they offer no sufficient reason why God should grant the request.

“Only one sufficient reason can be given, and this one the sinner must give, if he secures the blessings sought. When God asks, ‘Why shall I forgive your sins and save you?’ he must answer, ‘*Because Jesus died to save me.*’ This is ‘looking to Jesus’; ‘trusting’ him; ‘coming unto God through him;’ ‘receiving him;’ this is asking for pardon and salvation for *Jesus’ sake*; in a word, this is the faith by which one becomes a child of God. This is believing *on Jesus*. It is identical with ‘receiving’ him, as in John i. 12, ‘But as many as *received* him, to them gave he

power [or right or privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name.' Here you notice two things that are synonymous or mean the same thing, that is, *believing* on him, and *receiving* him.

"In our next we may consider the condition of those who believe on Jesus."

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE our next meeting, Florence did some good missionary work at her own home. Her father was a physician, very successful in his profession. He was highly educated, had a high sense of honor, was very benevolent, and prided himself on his morality. He did not often go to church, but had been induced to attend the Baptist church on the Sabbath to hear Dr. B., who had considerable reputation as a pulpit orator. The text was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." His subject was faith as the one thing essential for salvation. He was specially severe in his denunciation of the notion that *morality* can, in any degree, be a foundation for a hope of acceptance with God. On Sabbath afternoon the Doctor referred to the sermon, and expressed his disapprobation of the sentiment advanced, in a very decided manner. He insisted on it that what God demands of his creatures is, that they shall be

honest and upright in their dealings with their fellow-men, and do all the good they can. He quoted the language of James where he says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

"That," said he, "is my doctrine. I want a religion that will lead a man to be and to do as Christ did. It is said of him that he went about doing good. A man should be rewarded for what he *does*, not for what he *believes*. Your believing will not help your neighbor, or make him any happier. *Doing* is what pure religion demands."

Florence listened to her father without interrupting him. When he had finished, she ventured to say: "But, pa, it seems to me that the *doing* of every one will be governed by his *believing*. When you visit a patient, you prescribe a certain kind of medicine, because you believe that particular medicine will assist in restoring the man to health. In all your acts as a physician you are governed by your *beliefs*. But, if you will allow me to suggest it,

I would say that you preached a nice little Christian sermon in all you said about doing good. Christ requires that of all his followers, and so do all the apostles whose writings are in the New Testament."

Dr. G. "Then, why do the preachers have so much to say about faith, *faith*, FAITH, and so little about doing good?"

F. "Perhaps they do not say as much as they should about doing good; but you must remember there is a wide difference between *becoming* a Christian, on the one hand, and *being* or *acting as a Christian*, on the other."

Dr. G. "I do not see the difference. If I perform the duties of a Christian, I am a Christian, and doing such things makes me a Christian."

F. "But in your idea of salvation or Christianity, it seems to me, there is no need of Christ at all. Would you throw him out of view entirely?"

Dr. G. "No; Christ came to save those that imitate him."

F. "But he says, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth

not, shall be damned.' What will you do with that statement?"

Dr. G. "Of course we must believe in Christ. I have just said that I believe that he came to save those that imitate him. I always have believed in him. I deal honestly with my fellow-beings, and try to do them good; and I expect God to save me because of these things."

F. "But, pa, there is no place for Christ in such a means of salvation. You say you expect to be saved because of your own good works. But Paul says, 'By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.' (Romans iii. 20.) After showing this truth in every way, he says, in verse 28: 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' He does not say that a *Christian* can live in this world as a *Christian without the deeds of the law*, but that no one can become a *Christian by the deeds of the law*."

Dr. G. "But, as I told you, I do believe in Christ."

F. "But believing in Christ, according to the Scriptures, is to receive him as a Saviour;

to trust him ; to desire to be pardoned and saved because of *his merits* or *his righteousness*. It is as if we, because of our sins, owed the law or the justice of God an infinite debt, which could be paid only by our everlasting punishment. But Christ came and paid it all, and tells us that we shall have the benefit of all his work in paying the debt credited to our account, if we ask him for it. This *asking him for it* is what the Scriptures call *faith*, and it is thus that we become Christ's, or Christians. I know that you are always trying to do all the good you can. I do not know a Christian that does more. But you do these things to be saved. Christians do these things out of love and gratitude to Jesus for his work in saving them."

She waited to hear what her father would say, but he was silent, and seemed engaged in meditation. After a while she ventured to say:

"The way this matter of hoping to be saved by our own good works strikes me is something like this: a man owes a debt of a million dollars, and must be put into prison if he does not pay it; but he has nothing with which to

pay even a small part of it. But he feels that something must be done; so he gathers up a bucketful of old dry leaves, and takes them to the creditor, and asks him to accept this as full payment of the debt. I am sure I have not exaggerated in the illustration. Our good works can no more pay what we owe the justice of God, than could those dry leaves pay a debt of a million of dollars. Christ paid it by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and offers the benefit of all to us if we will accept."

Dr. G. "Well, daughter, I never listened to such a sermon before. I am inclined to think you are right, and that I have not been taking a correct view of this matter. I now see that there is a great difference between what a man must do to *become a Christian* and what he must do *after he has become a Christian*. I have been trying to do what Christians ought to do, but never did what is necessary in order that I might *become a Christian*."

The result of the matter was that Dr. G. began to search the Bible. He earnestly prayed for light and guidance. Everywhere, but especially in the first five chapters of Romans and

in the third of Galatians, he found the truth as Florence had presented it. With tears of penitence and joy, he accepted Jesus as his Saviour, trusting to his righteousness alone, realizing that of and in himself he was entirely destitute of anything to commend him to the favor of God.

CHAPTER X.

FROM a variety of causes, two weeks elapsed before I had another interview with my pupils. I was glad to learn that our topics were the subject of frequent conversations between them.

When we met, in order to test their continued interest, by ascertaining whether they kept in mind the topic proposed for consideration, I asked what subject we should consider, or if they had any choice.

To this Agnes promptly replied, "Why, we have a topic; you told us we should consider the *condition of Christians*; and we have tried to anticipate the particular character of the subject. Florence said she thought you meant that it would be about *falling from grace*. I said I thought it would be about those things that make Christians happy and contented in this world."

P. "Well, I guess you are both correct. But the topic you have suggested would be

about endless should we consider it in all its various aspects. Their condition is the very ideal of all that is desirable in the present state of existence. It will be both pleasant and profitable for you to collect and arrange the promises that are made to Christians. You will find many in the Old Testament, and especially in the Psalms; and in the New Testament you will find them abounding everywhere. All of them are intended and calculated to make us joyful, confident, and happy in every possible condition in life."

F. "Do you think it is wrong for Christians to be sorrowful and unhappy when they cannot help being so?"

P. "That is a question that cannot be answered by yes or no. One means by which sorrow finds expression is by weeping. But it is certain there is no sin in tears, because 'Jesus wept.' Sorrow becomes sinful when it is divorced from trust and hope. It is so, if with the sorrow there is a feeling of *repining*, *murmuring*, and *discontent*. Will you read the first verse of the fourteenth chapter of John?"

A. "I can repeat it from memory: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.'"

P. "From the manner in which you read it, no special thought is brought to our attention. Try again."

A. "'Let not *your* heart be troubled.'"

P. "What idea does that suggest to your mind?"

F. "If *others* are troubled in heart *Christians* should not be."

P. "You will find that suggestive and worthy of meditation. Others may well be troubled and cast down; but Christians, in the midst of all their sorrows, should be able to rejoice by reason of the many assurances of God's help and blessing. Try that first clause again."

F. "'Let not your *heart* be troubled.'"

P. "And *now* what is the thought?"

A. "I see it. Though your *body* be in a troubled condition, enduring great suffering, yet let not your *heart* be troubled."

F. "And still more. Though your *mind* be distressed, yet let not your *heart* be troubled."

When Jesus wept he was not troubled in *body* nor in *heart*, but in *mind*."

P. "Still another thought is brought to light by placing the emphasis on the word *troubled*. This word, in classic Greek, is used to describe the condition of the sea in its disturbances, also the condition of an army when routed and put to flight. Perhaps our word *panic* will present the idea. It means a disturbance that is without reason, and that is wild and uncontrollable. He does not forbid sorrow or grief; but that demoralized condition of the soul, such as takes possession of a multitude when a panic prevails.

"Now, let us turn our thoughts to the subject suggested by Florence, which she called falling from grace. Is the doctrine, as taught by Presbyterians, this, that if a person is truly converted *they will certainly be saved?*"

A. "That is what they believe and teach."

P. "You are correct in what you say, but it is not an answer to my question. Some may think that what I wish to impress on your minds is a distinction without a difference.

But I know that the distinction is real and important."

F. "They call it the doctrine of the *final perseverance* of the saints."

P. "That is correct. It is misleading to say that we teach that if a man is *once a Christian* he will *certainly be saved*. The same may be said of *this* form of statement used by some, that is, *it is impossible for them to fall from grace*."

A. "Do you not believe that these things are true?"

P. "I do. But the doctrine, as thus stated, is opposed by such silly sophistry as this, that 'if one who becomes a Christian will certainly be saved, then it makes *no difference how he lives, or what he does, he will certainly be saved*.' Such nonsense cannot be urged against the doctrine as we set it forth, because our statement is, that if a man is truly converted he will *certainly continue faithful all his life*."

A. "I see the difference, and I think it is of great importance; I confess that the reasons urged against the other form of statement

sometimes gave me trouble. I knew they were not true, but I did not see how to silence those that urged them. But I see that no such consequences can be thought of, or urged against the doctrine when properly stated."

P. "We believe in the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints:

"1. *From the very nature of salvation.* As we have already seen, we do not become Christians by our own good works or obedience, but by faith. Our good works are not taken into consideration in the matter of our becoming Christians. Nothing but the merit of Christ is the ground of our acceptance.

"2. When we become Christians, we are '*in Christ*,' that is, he and we are regarded as one in the sight of the law and justice of God. Paul says that such are no longer '*under the law*.' For the purpose of justification and acceptance we have nothing to do with the law; and the law has nothing to do with us. Christ is the end of the law for us. The law and justice must look to Christ alone for satisfaction. All the sins of those who trust in him are charged to his account."

A. "But suppose the Christian ceases to trust in Jesus, and does wicked things; what then?"

P. "You ask two questions under the form of one. Our whole doctrine is, that the *Christian will not cease to trust him*. It is true, he may do wicked things. But if a sin committed by the Christian will separate him from Christ, then *any sin* will do it. But any one who says he has no sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him, says the Apostle John. And thus, you see, it would be impossible to continue to be a Christian for a single day or hour, because no one can cease from sinning.

"3. We believe that Christians will certainly persevere, because *persevering grace has been promised to them*. Will you read Phil. i. 6?"

A. "'Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform' [or finish] 'it until the day of Jesus Christ.'"

P. "Of course he means that Jesus *begins* the work, and that he *will finish* it. A similar statement is found in Hebrews xii. 2. Will you read the first clause?"

A. "'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.'"

P. "In the margin you will see '*beginner*' for the word '*author*' in the text. One other passage on this point will suffice. Will you read First Corinthians x. 13?"

A. "'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'"

F. "What does the verse before this one mean?"

P. "Will you read it?"

F. "'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'"

P. "The meaning of all such admonitions is simply this: to be careful to use the means necessary to keep you from falling. You will find a very strong statement of the same kind in First Corinthians ix. 27. Will you read it?"

F. "'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when

I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway.' ”

P. “All that Paul here asserts is, that he uses the means necessary to keep him from falling. Of course, if a Christian does not use the means, he must fall. But our doctrine is simply this: that, by the grace of God, *he will use the means.*”

F. “How are we to account for the fact that many Christians, and among the number preachers of the gospel, do very well for a time, and then go back to the world, and even become the enemies of religion?”

P. “Perhaps John can best answer that question, as he does in First John ii. 19. Will you read it?”

F. “‘They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.’ ”

P. “There are other forms of statement that show the truth of the doctrine we are now considering. Will you read John x. 27-29?”

A. “‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know

them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' ”

P. “Here, you see, the statement is the strongest possible. It is that *they shall never perish*.

“You will find another form of statement in Romans viii. 30, which please read.”

A. “‘Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’ ”

P. “Here you see an unbroken chain. Our salvation, in all its parts, is declared to be of God's grace. We are taken back to the beginning, that is, God's predestinating grace; then in due time he *calls* those who were *predestinated*; then he *justifies* them; and finally he *glorifies* them. These passages, as you see, are stronger than our statement of the doctrine.”

F. “I do not see why any Christian should

not believe it. I know that some say that it leads Christians to become careless, but I do not see how it can do that."

P. "As I have already explained, it has no such tendency, because the doctrine is, that if they are really Christians, they *will not become careless*. Then, when they become careless, they may conclude that their heart never was right in the sight of God.

"The opposite doctrine is one of the peculiarities of what is known as Arminianism. But Arminius, even in his old age, was not willing to deny the doctrine as we hold it. It is declared that he said in a public conference, just before his death, 'that he had never opposed the doctrine of the certain perseverance of the truly believing; nor, thus far, was he willing to oppose it, because those testimonies of the Scriptures stood for it, to which he was not as yet able to answer.'" (*Encyclopædia of Religious Knowledge*, page 119.)

F. "You have made this very plain. That verse, Romans viii. 30, tells us of something I never could understand; I mean, what it says about predestination."

P. "That is, indeed, a very mysterious doctrine. But it is not half as mysterious as is the *denial of it*. Let it be the subject of our next conference."

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE our next meeting a very distressing accident occurred, by which the infant child of a saloon-keeper lost its life. The parents were avowedly atheists. By the carelessness of a washerwoman some boiling water had been overturned, a portion of which fell on the infant, scalding it in a most painful manner. The little sufferer lingered for two or three days. Its terrible condition excited the sympathy of the whole community. For some reason, I know not what, a Christian minister was requested to officiate at the funeral. A large crowd was assembled. In the course of his remarks the preacher took special pains to emphasize the fact that *all infants are taken directly to heaven*, and expressed his surprise, his pity, and his indignation that any respectable Christian organization should hold and teach the doctrine that *only a portion* of those dying in infancy *are saved*.

Many understood him to refer to the Pres-

byterian Church as teaching that some, or many infants are lost. In private circles the subject was discussed with no little warmth, many declaring that the Presbyterian Confession of Faith teaches that infants are in hell.

No sooner were we ready for work, than Florence asked me if I believed that any infants are lost.

"No," said I, "I believe that all infants dying in infancy are saved."

She then told me what she had heard people say a few days before, that they had heard Presbyterian preachers affirm that the Bible teaches that all non-elect infants are lost.

"That," said I, "is the old oft-repeated story, not to call it by a stronger name. But I never knew a Presbyterian preacher who believed or taught any such doctrine."

F. "Then why do they keep on saying it?"

P. "Some say it in ignorance; others, from malice. Perhaps it will suffice to show you how little truth there is in the charge, if I tell you what I once heard Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge say on this same charge. He was a teacher of theology in the Theological Semi-

nary in Princeton, New Jersey. He was a professor in that institution for forty-four years. No man in the world knew more about Presbyterianism and Presbyterian preachers than he did. He said, in one of his lectures, that some people were very sure they had known Presbyterian preachers who believed and taught the doctrine of infant damnation. He said if there were any such they had no authority for such a belief, either in the Bible or in our Confession of Faith. And, again, he said he had never known a Presbyterian preacher who held to such a doctrine, and, moreover, he had never heard of one."

A. "Then I suppose there are none who do teach it."

F. "Why does the Confession of Faith say that *elect infants dying in infancy are saved*? Why does it not say that *all infants dying in infancy are saved*?"

P. "Because the object of a Confession of Faith is to present what we believe the Bible *most certainly teaches*. On the subject of the universal salvation of infants the Bible teaches nothing directly. It does not teach that all are

saved, nor does it teach that a single one is lost. As they become sinful, and by imputation sinners also, by the sin of another without their own knowledge, we believe that, if they are taken from the world before reaching years of accountability, God in his mercy will graciously save them because of the righteousness of Jesus, though they have no knowledge of him and his salvation."

F. "But would it be just in God to allow any of them to perish?"

P. "Suppose that Jesus had not come as a Saviour; who would have been saved?"

F. "None."

P. "What, then, would have become of both infants and adults?"

F. "All must have hopelessly perished."

P. "Then you see it is a wicked assumption and presumption to intimate that God would be unjust if he did not save all infants.

"Again, if he would be *unjust* to allow an infant to perish, then he is *under obligation* to save it. But if he is *obliged* to save it, then its salvation is *not of grace*, but of *necessity*. But the Bible teaches that all who are saved are

saved *by grace*. Thus you see that in raising the cry that God would be unjust if he does not save all infants, we completely destroy the whole idea of *salvation by grace*.

“We know that all the elect infants dying in infancy will be saved most graciously, because it is God’s good pleasure.

“But to this some one may reply, ‘Then, why not believe that all infants dying in infancy are of the elect?’

“Well, that is just our opinion on the subject, that every infant dying in infancy is of the elect. This opinion is based on the general tenor of the Scriptures; but it is a question on which the Bible does not teach anything in a direct manner; therefore, the utmost that we dare say in a Confession of Faith is what we do therein say, that is, that elect infants, dying in infancy, are graciously saved by the blood of Jesus.”

F. “It is very plain, and I see that our Confession is right. It goes as far as the revelation that God has given us would warrant us in going.”

A. “I do not see why people should tell

such ugly stories about Presbyterians. They do not take the trouble to ask what we believe. But now let us hear about that doctrine of predestination. People talk about this as *that horrible doctrine*. They say that, according to our belief, they do not see any use in trying to be a Christian, because, if we are to be saved, we will be saved any way; and if we are *not* to be saved, then we *cannot be, whatever we may do*."

P. "Yes, that is the way many talk, and it shows that they have the spirit of a selfish hireling or of a slave. They do not think that the character, and works, and life of a Christian on earth are worth anything, except in so far as it will enable them to escape hell and get a place in heaven. It is difficult to see how any one, actuated by such selfish motives, can be a Christian. They simply tell us what they would think and do if they believed in predestination. And here it is, the picture they draw of themselves: 'Well, I am a Christian, and therefore I am predestinated to be saved. Since this is so, and I am very fond of amusement, I will go to the dance instead of to

the prayer-meeting. Yes, and there are many ways in which I like to indulge myself, and seeing I am one of the elect, why, I will just indulge, and have lots of fun.' That is their idea of Christianity, if they could only be assured that their salvation were absolutely sure. But the history of the church shows that those who believe in predestination are, of all others, the most earnest and zealous in trying to make their election sure. They, of all others, are most persevering in the use of means whereby they may find acceptance with God.

"While there are mysteries connected with the doctrine, yet they are no greater than some things connected with the doctrine of the incarnation; such, for example, that Jesus is truly God, and truly man.

"The whole subject of predestination must be viewed from two standpoints: *divine* and *human*. As viewed from the former, both in the light of reason and revelation, it is absolutely certain that God has, from eternity, foreordained all things that come to pass.

"As viewed from the *human* standpoint, it is just as certain that *man* is a *free agent*, and

does as he pleases, and thus has his destiny in his own hands.

“The objections that are urged against the doctrine may, with exactly the same force, be urged against the doctrine of *God’s omniscience*.”

A. “I do not understand how that can be.”

P. “It is very plain. Take any event of any kind, or all events. If God is *omniscient* he knows before they come to pass whether or not they will come to pass, and also everything in connection with their coming to pass. Take the case of a child but one day old. God knows what will be the history of that child, though it may live a hundred years. He knows it infinitely better than the whole world will know it after the child has reached old age and died. He knows what will be its eternal destiny. Then all things in reference to it will be just as he now knows them; they are *fixed* and *certain*; they cannot be otherwise, else he did not know them. Thus you see that God’s omniscience, his foreknowledge, presents all the difficulties that are presented by predestination. This has led some to deny his omni-

science. They say he cannot know what will happen to a free agent. This, of course, involves the denial of the possibility of prophecy; and this is no better than atheism. Do you understand it?"

A. "It is very clear, but I never thought of it in that light. But if an event is *fixed* and *certain*, then I do not see that anything we can do can change it."

P. "It is not my purpose to attempt to enable you to understand all the mysteries connected with it. The important question to be considered is this: What do the Scriptures clearly teach? Reference has already been made to the absurd inferences which some draw from it: thus, if I am one of the elect, then it matters not what I do, or how I live; I shall be saved, simply because I have been predestinated to eternal life."

F. "I confess, when people thus talk, I do not know how to answer them."

P. "It is with this doctrine just as it is with the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints: the enemies of the doctrine state it to suit themselves, and in such a manner as to

give some degree of plausibility to their absurd inferences. If this doctrine is stated as it is in the Bible, to their surprise they find no foundation for their silly conclusions. Please read Romans viii. 29."

A. "'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.'"

P. "This is one of the strong passages in favor of the doctrine; but you notice that nothing is said about the *salvation* of a man *being fixed and certain, regardless* of his character and conduct. The predestination is *unto holiness*, or that we may be *conformed to the image of Jesus*. Now read another of the strong proof-texts, that found in Eph. i. 4."

A. "'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'"

P. "Now try those silly inferences when the doctrine is thus stated in a scriptural form. It will be thus: 'Since we have been predestinated to a life of holiness here on earth, therefore it makes no difference if we do live

in sin.' Or thus: 'If a man has been predestinated to be a carpenter all his life, then it makes no difference if he is a blacksmith, and never works at the carpenter's trade at all.' When the doctrine is properly stated, you can readily see the absurdity of all those foolish inferences."

F. "That puts the doctrine in a very different light. But I suppose they would then say, that if they are *elected to be good Christians here, they will be*, any way, and that, therefore, *there is no use in trying to be such.*"

P. "No; any one who would so reason would stand convicted of the grossest folly, because he would not thus reason and act in *anything else but religion*. Suppose the man who would so reason was a farmer: He must know that if God has foreordained *all things* that come to pass, he has foreordained *just how many bushels of corn or wheat* the farmer will raise the coming year. Then, according to the supposition, the farmer must say, 'Well, since God knows just how much grain I will raise the coming year, it is *fixed and certain*, and *nothing can change it*. Therefore, I will

sit down and enjoy myself, instead of laboring and toiling in plowing, and sowing and tending my crop.' How much corn do you suppose such a farmer would find in his crib, or wheat in his granary, when the time of harvest is over?"

F. "They would be empty."

P. "And the farmer very well knows it, and acts accordingly. Thus it is in religion. As that farmer by his diligence makes it *sure* that it was predestinated that his crib shall be full of corn, so can any man make his '*calling and election sure*.' "

F. "I heard some one say that God elected to everlasting life those whom he foresaw would accept Jesus."

P. "That is somewhat like the theory of those who say that God foreknows only some things that are future. In this the trouble would be how *to know* what he should *not foreknow*. That would represent him as having all things before him, and from these selecting some things that he would foreknow, and other things that he would not foreknow. But the difficulty is, that he must have first

known them to know what he would not know ; than which you can conceive of nothing more absurd.

“As to his foreseeing who would accept Jesus, and electing them to life, these five things may be said :

“1. In that case there would be no need of any election. Such persons would be as well off without the election.

“2. It would take from God all participation in the salvation of the elect. The glory of a man’s salvation would be to himself, because God simply foresaw that he would accept.

“3. It would leave infants to perish, because God could not foresee that they would accept.

“4. The Bible declares that the election or predestination is not to the *end*, that is, *eternal life*, but to the *means by which that eternal life is secured*. We are predestinated *unto holiness* ; and *to be conformed to the image of his Son*.

“5. In Ephesians i. 5 we are told that the predestination is simply ‘*according to the good pleasure of his will*.’ This is declared to be

the *whole ground* or reason of the predestination."

F. "Do you think anybody can be saved that wishes salvation?"

P. "Most assuredly. There is no church on earth that teaches more fully and emphatically the doctrine of free agency than does the Presbyterian Church. We teach it, and believe it, and know it, because the Bible makes it very plain. Jesus himself said, 'Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.' The invitations of the gospel are of the most general character. Nothing could be more general than this: '*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*'" (Rev. xxii. 17.)

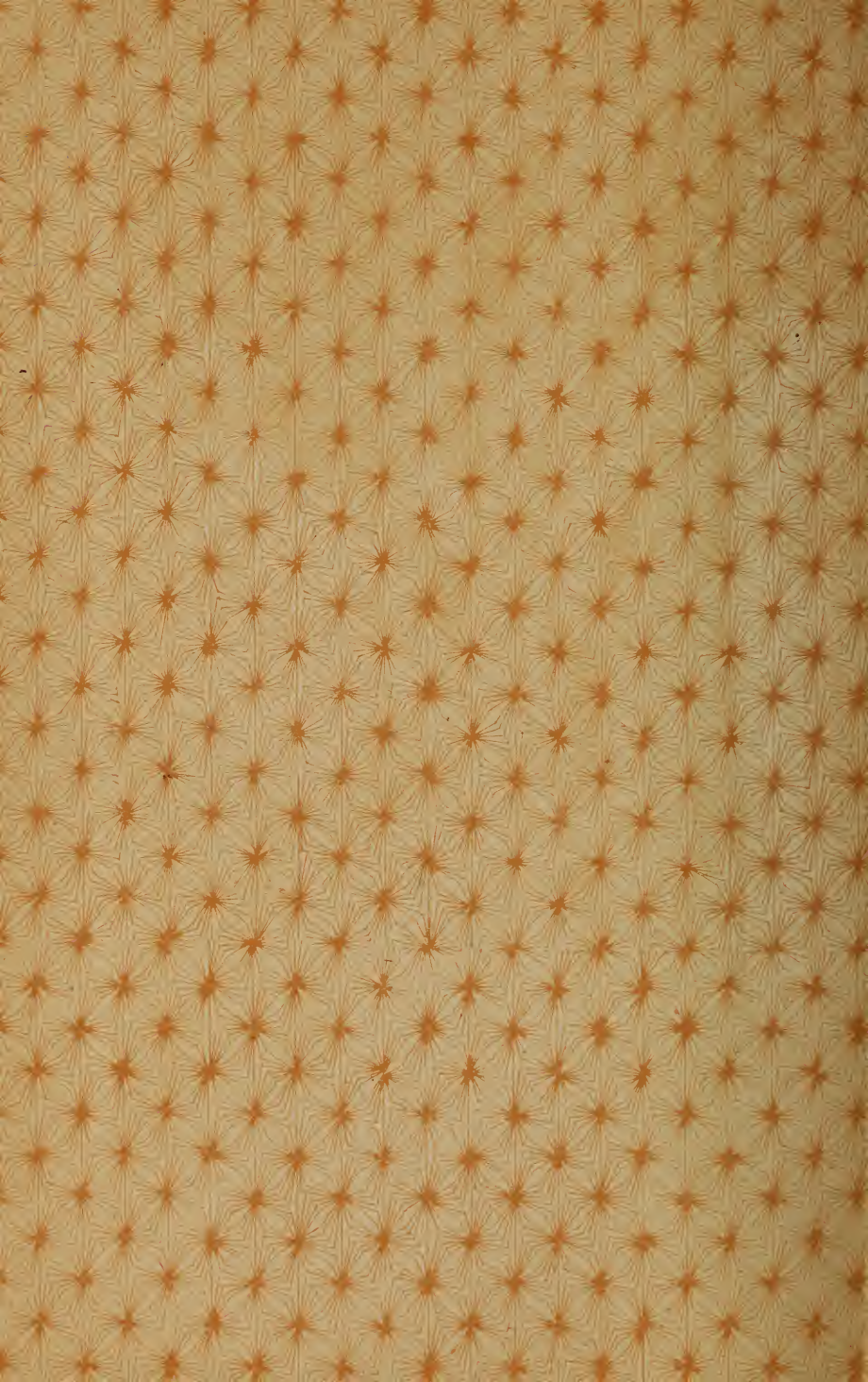
A. "Well, I do not see why people tell so many stories about what Presbyterians believe and teach."

P. "Men are inclined to run to extremes. There are two facts that we must never lose sight of; one of these is the absolute *sover-*
eignty of God; the other is the *free agency of*
man. Some have pushed their ideas of the former to the extreme of *fatalism*. This the Presbyterian Church has carefully avoided.

Others have gone to such extremes in their ideas of free agency as to deny the *sovereignty of God*. All do this who deny the doctrine of election or predestination. It is difficult to determine which extreme is the more objectionable and hurtful. The first extreme makes man a mere *puppet*. The latter *degrades God*, and robs him of some of the most glorious attributes of his nature."

And now, young friends, I am sorry that our work, for a time at least, must be discontinued. I am truly thankful and glad that you have taken so much interest in considering these truths of our holy religion. As I anticipated, you have been apt scholars. Although it will not be my privilege to meet with you for some time, yet I hope you will not discontinue your study of these blessed doctrines. If, in the good providence of God, we are permitted to renew these studies, I hope you will manifest the same interest, and thus "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen."

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